

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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R 241019Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8664
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANYKOK 2441

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR MOPS CB VM
SUBJECT: REFUGEES REPORT CAMBODIAN-VIET FIGHTING AT HA TIEN

1. FRIENDS , RELIABLE U S JOURNALISTS RELAYED INFORMATION TO US
JAN 24 WHICH THEY OBTAINED RECENTLY FROM REFUGEES FROM VIET-
NAM CONCERNING A REPORTEDLY SUCCESSFUL CAMBODIAN COUNTER-
ATTACK AGAINST VIETNAMESE IN THE HA TIEN AREA OF SOUTH VIENT-
NAM. PAVN 307 DIVISION IS SAID TO HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES.
IN THREE SEPARATE ACCOUNTS, TWO VIETNAMESE AND ONE CAMBODIAN
WHO LEFT RACH GIA JAN 13 AND ARRIVED INLAEM SING JAN 21 SAID
THAT ON JAN 5 THE PAVN 307TH DIVISION CROSSED INTO CAMBODIA
NORTH OF HA TIEN, VIET-NAM AT A HAMLET CALLED THACH DONG AND
A HILL CALLED DA DUNG. ON JAN 6, CAMBODIAN "ELEMENTS" SWEPT
AROUND THE VIETNAMESE FLANK TO THE NORTH AND ATTACKED THE
307TH FROM THE REAR WITH WHAT THE REFUGEES DESCRIBED AS
"DEVASTATING EFFECT." ONE OF THE REFUGEES, A MECHANIC WHO REPAIRED
THE MILITARY TRUCKS, SAID THAT "MANY, MANY TRUCKLOADS" OF DEAD
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AND WOUNDED VIETNAMESE TROOPS WERE BROUGHT TO HA TIEN FOR BURIAL
OR TREATMENT IN A MILITARY HOSPITAL IN HA TIEN. MOST CIVILIANS
HAD EVACUATED HA TIEN EARLIER. TWO OF THE REFUGEES COMMENTED
ON THE DECLINE IN FIGHTING CAPABILITY OF THE VIETNAMESE.
THE CAMBODIAN SAID THAT THE "FAMOUS" 307TH WAS NOT UP TO ITS FORMER
STANDARDS BECAUSE MANY NEW RECRUITS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH VIET-
NAM WERE IN ITS RANKS. A VIETNAMESE REFUGEE SAID THAT PAVN HAS

DETERIORATED BECAUSE OF WHAT PAVN TROOPS HAVE SEEN IN THE SOUTH.
THEY FEEL MISLED BY WARTIME PROPAGANDA FROM HANOI ABOUT CONDITIONS
IN THE SOUTH AND PARTICULARLY FIND THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH VIET-
NAMESE GIRLS SEDUCTIVE IN A NON-PROLETARIAN FASHION.

2. COMMENT: THIS REPORTED BATTLEFIELD REVERSE TO THE VIETNAMESE
SEEMS FEASIBLE. REPORTS OF FIGHTING IN AN GIANG AND THIS REPORTED
BATTLE MAY HAVE FORMED PART OF RATIONALE FOR RECENT VISIT BY
GENERAL GIAP TO THE SOUTHERN BATTLEFRONT AND TOUGHER LINE TAKEN
IN NHAN DAN JAN 20 . UNLESS THERE IS MOVEMENT ON THE DIPLOMATIC
FRONT, THESE DEVELOPMENTS MAY PRESAGE RENEWED AGGRESSIVE ACTION
BY THE VIETNAMESE.
WHITEHOUSE

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